



MOTION TO RESTORE FOOD STAMPS FOR LEGAL IMMIGRANTS

Today, the House will vote on the Baca motion to instruct conferees on H.R. 2646, the Farm Security Act. This motion would instruct conferees to accept the Senate-passed provisions to restore food stamps for legal immigrants, recently-arrived children, the disabled and refugees. (The House bill contains no provision to restore Food Stamps benefits for legal immigrants.) The House debated the Baca motion to instruct on Thursday, April 18.

President Bush proposed to restore food stamps for legal immigrants who have been in the country for at least five years in his budget this year. The GOP-controlled Congress had stripped legal immigrants of their eligibility for food stamps in the 1996 welfare reform bill. On February 7, 2002, the Senate voted, by the overwhelming vote of 96 to 1, to include the Bush Administration's proposal in the Senate version of the Farm Bill, as well as to provide food stamps to recently-arrived children, the disabled and refugees.

And yet, on Wednesday, April 10, the House GOP conferees on the farm bill voted to block the Bush Administration's proposal to restore food stamps for legal immigrants!! The conferees on H.R. 2646 voted instead for a proposal by Rep. Goodlatte, R-Va., which is much more stringent and would make it virtually impossible for immigrant families to qualify for food stamp benefits. This Republican opposition is preventing more than 350,000 people from benefitting from a program that helps poor families feed their children. It is time for President Bush to show real leadership by telling Republicans in Congress that blocking legal immigrant children and the disabled from getting this help is contrary to the compassionate conservatism they talk so much about.

Restoring food stamp benefits for low-income legal permanent residents and children is the right and responsible thing to do. It helps people get the nutrition they really need. Further, legal immigrants who work hard, live by the rules, pay taxes, and even serve in our armed forces deserve access to food stamps. We should be promoting these values through fair and equal treatment for all families.

Democrats will continue fighting to restore this needed help for immigrant families. Vote YES on the Baca motion to instruct.

WE
TAKE
DOWN
FLOOR